

**PEEPS AT
MANY LANDS**

THE BALTIC STATES

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR
IN THE "PEEPS SERIES"*

RUMANIA



THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

*Each with four full-page reproductions in colour
and eight illustrations from photographs.*

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PEEPS AT MANY LANDS
THE BALTIC STATES
LATVIA, LITHUANIA
& ESTONIA

BY
HEBE SPAULL

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS
FOUR OF THEM IN COLOUR

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PLACE-NAMES

Since the recovery of independence by these three States many towns, rivers, etc., have been called again by their old native names, in place of the Russian or German names they have borne for several hundreds of years.

LATVIA

<i>Name Today.</i>					<i>Russian or German Name.</i>
DAUGAVPILS	-	-	-	-	DVINSK
VENTSPILS	-	-	-	-	WINDAU
LIEPAJA	-	-	-	-	LIBAU
R. DAUGAVA	-	-	-	-	R. DVINA
R. VENTA	-	-	-	-	- R. WINDAU

LITHUANIA

KAUNAS	-	-	-	-	KOVNO
KLAIPEDA	-	-	-	-	MEMEL
R. NEMUNAS	-	-	-	-	- R. NIEMEN

ESTONIA

TALLINN	-	-	-	-	ELEVEL
TARTU	-	-	-	-	DORPAT
VALGA	-	-	-	-	VALK
RAKVERE	-	-	-	-	- VEZENBERG

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SKETCH-MAP OF THE BALTIC STATES.

THE BALTIC STATES

CHAPTER I

BY THE SHORES OF THE FROZEN SEA

By the shores of the tideless Baltic Sea, whose waters are sometimes frozen during the winter months, are three small countries, where live some of the oldest races in Europe. For centuries these people, sheltered by vast impenetrable forests, were forgotten by the rest of Europe. Even today, when they have awakened to new life, many people in our own land know as little about them as they do about the more remote parts of Africa or Asia.

Yet there is much that is fascinating to be found in the three ~~Baltic~~ lands of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Their fascination lies not in the possession of high and rugged mountains, for these countries are for the most part flat, though they possess a few low-lying hills, but in their wonderful forests and innumerable lakes.

Of the three countries Latvia is the largest. The word "Latvia" is derived from a word which means

The Baltic States

“The Forest Clearer,” and so in the very name of the country we have a clue to the coming of the people who now inhabit the land, and whose origin is otherwise shrouded in mystery. Many centuries ago, probably before the Christian era, these people and their cousins, the Lithuanians, seeking a new home, discovered this land of dark, almost impenetrable forests. They cleared a way through the thick under-growth and established little settlements in the heart of the forest. So difficult of access were these settlements that none ventured to penetrate them, and the Letts and Lithuanians remained undisturbed for centuries.

A Lithuanian historian has given us a very vivid description of these forests as they were in olden times. He writes : “The oaks lifted their wild crowns on stems so thick that five men could not embrace them, branches entangled with branches, the foliage intertwined, forming giant roofs which shut out light and sun and rain and, covering wide expanses, ivy, convolvulus, and honeysuckle twisted themselves so fast and strong from tree to tree that only an axe could clear the way, or the wayfarer would have to follow the path trodden by wild beasts. Every little opening was hedged in by luxuriously clinging tendrils of hops that clung to branches and fallen trunks, suspended in heavy garlands, swaying in the wind. Groves of birch grew down the sunny slopes, and the outer, tender, younger

By the Shores of the Frozen Sea

bushes stood right out into the water of the river, where the deer congregated to quench their thirst, and nibbled the leaves of the overhanging branches. Even in winter the denseness and the warmth of the forest was so great that fallen snow immediately melted. Slowly and anxiously the wanderer had to battle his way—no pathway, no sign showed the road from neighbour to neighbour—through this wilderness ; only the barking of a dog or the crowing of a cock told of inhabited places. Across the isolated openings where an underwood of a man's height would spring up during a summer, the wayfarer was again closed in by the mighty forest, until he suddenly found himself on the brink of a ridge with a wide outlook over a surging sea of foliage.”

No wonder that the people who made themselves masters of the forest and made it their home should be called the “forest clearers.”

But the Baltic States are rich in waterways as well as in forests. Latvia has no fewer than five hundred rivers and more than a thousand lakes. Lithuania and Estonia have a still greater number of lakes, though not so many rivers. Both lakes and rivers abound in fish. The most important rivers are the Daugava in Latvia, the Niemen (or Nemunas) in Lithuania, and the Emajögi and Narva in Estonia.

Estonia, though the smallest of the Baltic States,

The Baltic States

can boast one of the largest lakes in Europe—namely, Lake Peipus—which forms the frontier between Estonia and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (as Russia is now called) during the whole of its length.

All three countries have not only lakes and rivers, but, as we have already noticed, the sea as well. The name of the sea—"Baltic"—comes from a Latvian word meaning "white," and for several months in the year part of this sea is indeed white, when it becomes frozen and covered with snow.

These waterways are largely used for the export of timber from the forests. The felled trunks of trees, roped together, are to be seen floating in great numbers down the principal rivers. On the River Niemen, for instance, it is a common sight in the summer-time to see a whole family "camping out" on such a raft, a rough kind of tent being rigged up to provide some shelter. It may take some weeks for the timber to be floated down with the stream from the forest to the port in this way for shipment to other lands.

Apart from timber, dairy produce is exported from the Baltic States in considerable quantities. All the States have a certain number of factories which manufacture goods chiefly for their own people. Estonia has an important cotton industry, and in this province, too, is found the oil shale, which provides cheap fuel for the nation.

By the Shores of the Frozen Sea

Before we take a peep at each of the States in turn it would be as well to see who are their neighbours. It will help us to understand these countries if we realize that their neighbours are all of them much larger and more powerful than the three States put together. The largest of these neighbours is the U.S.S.R., whose borders form the eastern frontiers of both Latvia and Estonia. Poland forms the eastern boundary of Lithuania, and Germany the south-western.

Separated from Tallinn by a steamer journey across the Gulf of Finland of only four hours, lies Finland. But as the sea separates the Baltic States and Finland, she is not so close a neighbour as the three big countries we have mentioned.

We shall see in the chapters which follow the part played by these neighbours in the history of these lands.

LATVIA

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF LATVIA

THE story of Latvia—and indeed of the other Baltic States—is a tragedy which at last gives promise of having a happy ending.

It is not certain when the Latvians or Letts first settled near the shores of the Baltic Sea, but it is believed that by the eighth century they had built for themselves a whole chain of frontier fortifications against attack by the Slavs. Goths and Vikings made attempts to subdue the “forest clearers,” but were driven off by these sturdy folk.

In the twelfth century, however, the pagan Lettish tribes had to contend with a more formidable foe. In the year 1150 a storm arose off the Baltic coast and some merchants of Lübeck had to seek shelter in the mouth of the River Daugava. These strangers were followed about thirty years later by some Dominican missionaries. But the Letts took little heed of their message. Then one day, in the year 1200, twenty-

Latvia

three ships came sailing down the mouth of the Daugava. The men on board bore as their symbol a black cross above a red sword. They were the Knights of the Teutonic Order, and their leader was Albert of Bremen.

The Knights, aided by their priests, set about to subdue the people with the sword and to convert them forcibly to Christianity. The year after their arrival they founded the city of Riga, now the capital of Latvia, but for the next fifty years the Letts continued to resist the invaders, though at the end of that period they were compelled finally to yield to the leader.

Thus began for the Latvians the first of four periods of foreign domination. From the thirteenth century to the year 1920 they were to experience this iron heel of domination. Until the year 1562 the country was entirely under German rule, and indeed, although the sovereignty of the country was to change several times, the Teutonic Knights, or Baltic Barons as they afterwards came to be called, remained the real masters of Latvia. By about the middle of the fifteenth century, the Teutonic Knights had succeeded in establishing on the Baltic sea-coast the federative Republic of Livonia, composed of Latvia and Estonia. •

Gradually the Latvians were deprived of their land and of their political rights. They were reduced to serfdom and misery. As an old historian said, Latvia

The Story of Latvia

became "a heaven for the nobles, a paradise for the priests, a gold mine for the merchants, and a hell for the peasants."

All the same the Barons did some constructive work in the country. They founded towns, built castles and churches, and fostered agriculture.

In the year 1562 Poland succeeded in gaining sovereignty over part of Latvia. The great Swedish King, Gustavus Adolphus, made war on Poland and wrested the Lettish provinces from that country. For the first time since they had come under foreign domination the peasants were given some rights as human beings. King Gustavus not only had the Bible translated into Lettish, but he founded the University of Dorpat, or Tartu as it is now called, as well as a number of schools. But these "good old Swedish days," as the Letts call them, only lasted about a hundred years. In 1709 war broke out between Russia and Sweden and the Russians were victorious. Part of Latvia was ceded to Russia, though for nearly a century Courland, as the province over which Poland continued to exercise some control was called, remained a semi-independent state.

Under Russian rule the Barons regained their lost privileges and the lot of the Lettish serfs became worse than ever. Of course there were kindly Barons who showed some consideration for their serfs, but as a rule

Latvia

a Baron who gave his serfs special privileges was regarded with suspicion by his fellow Barons, so that only those who had the courage of their convictions were likely to grant such privileges.

One part of the story of the conquest of Latvia, however, sounds rather like a fairy tale. The Russian Czar, Peter the Great, who conquered Latvia, fell in love with a beautiful Latvian girl named Marta. She was only a farmer's daughter, yet he married her, and after the death of her husband she reigned for two years over Russia as Catherine I.

At the end of the eighteenth century Poland ceased for more than a hundred years to exist as an independent state, and Courland too came under the domination of Russia. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Latvian serfs were declared emancipated, but even so it was not till about 1860 that they were given certain civil rights and freedom of movement, and can be said to have been really liberated. It was not till after then that Latvian literature and music began to be developed.

Then in 1914 came the Great War. It was a curious position for Latvia. The great landlords were German, though, like the Latvians, they owed allegiance to Russia. But the Latvian peasants were Russian subjects though they served German masters, and although they desired to be freed from both the Russian

The Story of Latvia

and German yokes, they fought bravely under the Czar for the allied cause.

Latvia itself suffered all the horrors of invasion. Many Latvians fled to Russia. Some remained in Latvia during the German military occupation, whilst the rest sought protection behind the Russian lines.

Meantime, though the Letts fought bravely for the defence of their country, they were working secretly for Lettish independence. Before the Great War came to an end, revolution broke out in Russia. As we know, towards the end of 1917 the Bolsheviks assumed power and the Czar was deposed. The new Russian Government concluded peace with Germany, and, by the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, Latvia was ceded to Germany.

But the Latvians were not prepared to agree to this, and after the Armistice was declared on November 11, 1918, they decided, a few days later, on November 18, to proclaim the country a free and independent State.

Unhappily, Latvia's troubles were by no means at an end. The Germans were still in occupation. The difficulties which confronted the newly formed Latvian Government were almost insurmountable : there were no funds, there was no regular army ; trade, industry, and agriculture were ruined. To add to these misfortunes the Bolsheviks began to advance, as the Germans, breaking the agreement with the Allies, surrendered the

Latvia

territory of Latvia before the Latvians had been able to organize an army. For the next eighteen months the Latvians, with some help from the Allies, had to fight for their independence against the Bolsheviks as well as against the German forces. By the summer of 1920 the war of independence was brought to an end, and peace was concluded with both Germany and the U.S.S.R.

Then followed a time of terrible struggle. Almost the entire country was devastated. Most of the people were starving and homeless. Many lived in dug-outs or trenches or in the cellars of their ruined homes. The country was terribly poor, so that the task of reconstruction was a very difficult one. Fortunately the people of America and Great Britain and other countries gave some help through the Red Cross and other societies.

Gradually, owing largely to the indomitable perseverance of the people, prosperity began to return to the country. The little Republic was admitted to membership of the League of Nations in 1921, and at the same time she began to introduce many reforms through the Parliament which had been set up. By one of the first Acts of this Parliament, the land, which had formerly belonged entirely to the Baltic Barons, was divided in such a way that the peasants secured a considerable part of it. This naturally caused hardship to some of

The Story of Latvia

the land-owning classes, many of whom were reduced from wealth to poverty. For a time this gave rise to great bitterness of feeling between the German and Lettish citizens of Latvia. Fortunately there are signs that the two races are beginning to understand one another better and to work together for the good of their country.

CHAPTER III

RIGA AND OTHER LATVIAN TOWNS

I AM afraid there are some young people to whom Riga is but a name, and who know little more about the capital of Latvia than that conveyed in the old limerick :

“There was a young lady of Riga
Who went for a ride on a tiger.
They came back from that ride
With the lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger.”

Unfortunately the name of the town does not rhyme with “tiger,” nor are there any tigers on which to take rides, for Riga no longer boasts a zoo. Before the war there was a very nice zoo in the forest around Riga, but the tigers and other wild animals have been sold, and in the summer the old zoo is turned into a holiday camp for children. The small boys who inhabit the old

Latvia

monkey house must, I fear, come in for a good deal of teasing from their friends. All the same, they appear to have a thoroughly good time.

Someone has described Riga as the “window of the Baltic.” It is certainly a very pleasant window and much may be seen from it.

We have already seen that Riga was founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In the later Middle Ages the port flourished as a member of the old Hanseatic League, that curious but powerful association of merchants in Northern Europe. Today, in Riga, you may wander along by the side of the River Daugava—or Dvina, as it was called in Russian—and find many quaint, narrow winding streets leading down to the water’s edge. The old gabled buildings where the merchants lived and had their warehouses are still standing to remind us of the old Hanseatic days.

But the centre of the city is for the most part modern. The Russians have left little mark upon the architecture of the city except for a big Russian cathedral. Most of the other buildings are German in style and character.

Through the centre of the city runs a canal, and on either side is a small but very charming park. Strange to say, one of the most beautiful objects to be seen from the park is a disused gas-works. But so far from looking like gas-works the building looks like the

Riga and other Latvian Towns

tower of a medieval castle. The gas-works are now no longer used, for, owing to the great amount of water available as a source of power, electricity has taken the place of gas in the city.

Riga has a number of interesting old churches. One of these, St. Peter's, has the largest wooden spire in Europe. Another, now the Lutheran Cathedral, has beautiful stained glass windows and many fine old monuments.

One of the finest old buildings in Riga, and indeed in the whole of the Baltic States, is known as the House of Blackheads. The Blackheads are a society or club, formed in the fifteenth century, who took as their symbol a negro's head, the emblem of their patron saint, St. Mauritius.

There is a University at Riga, in which too, as it is the capital, are to be found the Parliament buildings and Government offices. Latvia, as we have seen, is a Republic. Everyone, whether man or woman, has the right to vote by secret ballot. The Parliament elects a President for three years. As in many other continental countries, there are a great many more political parties in Latvia than in Great Britain.

Although Riga is a river port, it is nearer to the sea than London. It was perhaps because ships can and do ply between London and Riga without necessarily

Latvia

calling at any other port *en route* that Napoleon called Riga a “suburb of London.”

The way to the sea from Riga, if you choose to go by motor-bus, lies through beautiful forests. These forests lead right down to the sea. The forests extend over what are known as the “moving dunes.” These “moving dunes” are sand hills which actually do move. Because they move, the forests are not allowed to be cut down, as the trees keep the dunes steady. This means that towns cannot be built along the seashore as they are in England. Instead, houses are built actually in the forest, with one or two small roads, with a few shops and houses, running through the forest. With the sea and forest so close together, the Baltic coast makes an ideal holiday centre for boys and girls.

The road from Riga to the coast, immediately outside the city, passes what is probably one of the finest war memorials in the world. This takes the form of a beautiful cemetery in which all the Latvian soldiers who distinguished themselves by their bravery are buried. The cemetery is entered through an arch, finely sculptured by one of the chief Latvian sculptors, and at the far end, reached by a wide flight of steps, is an impressive monument to the fallen. The monument depicts the nation in the form of a woman, mourning the loss of her children. Near this war cemetery is

Riga and other Latvian Towns

another cemetery in the forest where Latvian statesmen are buried.

There are several other ports in Latvia besides Riga. The largest of these after Riga, and the second largest town in the country, is Liepaja, or Libau as it used to be called. This harbour is the base of the Latvian fleet. Unlike Riga, this port, which is on the western coast and not on the Gulf of Riga, is open all the year round, and even the largest liner can enter it. Before the war Liepaja had many prosperous industries, including iron and steel works, flour mills, and factories for the manufacture of colours and varnishes. Much of this prosperity has, unfortunately, been lost, though gradually some of the industries are being revived.

The third largest port is Ventspils, an old town on the mouth of the River Venta, with a medieval castle of the thirteenth century. The town is not only a port, but a favourite seaside holiday resort as well. There are several other ports in Latvia, but they are all quite small.

Of the other towns the largest after Liepaja is Daugavpils, formerly known as Dvinsk. This town, formerly a great Russian fortress, stands on the banks of the River Daugava, close to the Polish frontier. The town is surrounded by great ramparts, and inside the principal fort are lines and lines of barracks. Today

Latvia

Daugavpils is the chief training centre of the Latvian army.

Jelgava is another important Latvian town. In olden days it was the capital of the duchy of Courland, the province against the Baltic Sea. Although there are altogether fifty-seven towns in Latvia, they are, apart from those we have mentioned, quite small. This is not surprising when we remember that the country itself, although larger than Holland and Belgium put together, has only two million inhabitants. This is largely because it is primarily an agricultural and timber-producing state.

CHAPTER IV

LATVIAN PEASANT LIFE

VILLAGES such as we have in England are almost unknown in Latvia. Those that exist are for the most part to be found along the sea-coast and in the province of Latgale, which borders Russia. Elsewhere the Latvian chooses to live on isolated farms. For not only does he dislike change of any kind, but he is an "individualist." In other words, he does not care particularly for the society of his neighbours outside his own home and his own circle of friends.

Today there are two types of farms to be found in

Latvian Peasant Life

Latvia. There are the old farms which before the war the farmers leased from the big land-owners, who, as we have seen, were for the most part Baltic Barons. These have now passed into the ownership of the farmers, who have lived on them sometimes for many generations. The other type of farms are quite new and have been created out of the division of the great estates which, as we have seen, was carried out soon after the war in order to provide the poorer peasants with land. The farmers who own these new farms are usually much poorer than those on the old farms.

Most of the farm houses are built of timber and many of them are thatched with straw, which gives them a picturesque appearance. Some of the old farms, which may date back for as much as several centuries, are built of round logs, no saw having been used to fashion them. Here and there one may even find very old houses built in the form of tents. These are constructed of poles and covered with bark. Today such huts, where they exist, are generally used as wash-houses.

The farm house is usually surrounded by a number of outhouses. One of these is the barn or "Klets," as the Latvians call it. This is not only used to store the corn and salt meat for the winter, but it contains numerous heavy chests, usually brightly painted, filled

Latvia

with the Sunday clothes and other valuables of the family.

But the "Klets" is not only a place in which to store things. It serves as a bedroom for occasional guests, and when a wedding takes place at the farm the bridal pair spend the night there before leaving for their new home. It is in the Klets, too, that the farmer—or any member of his household—when he dies, is placed, under a roof of straw, before being laid to rest in the churchyard.

Another building of interest on a Latvian farm is the "Pirte." This is the bathroom, but it is quite different from our bathrooms. The "Pirte" is dug for the greater part into the earth. Inside is a huge stove made of rough boulders. When the family wishes to take a bath, the boulders are heated until they are a glowing red. Water is then poured on them and the bathers lie down on the benches to enjoy the steam bath. While lying down they beat themselves lightly with small brooms of fresh birch branches to encourage the circulation. In the winter-time after such a bath they will often rub themselves with frozen snow.

There is certain to be a small orchard attached to the farm, and almost certainly a small flower garden. The flower beds are usually tended by the young girls of the household. At the far end of the garden, in a quiet and sunny place, are the bee-hives. These are always

Latvian Peasant Life

the special care of grandfather, and for many hours he will sit, pipe in mouth, listening to the humming of the bees.

In the old days, rather more than a hundred years ago, there were many "honey trees," as the peasants called them, to be found in the forests. These trees were pines on which wild bees made their hives. Even today, in remote parts of the forests, such honey trees are still to be found. In olden times the peasants were allowed, on payment of a tax, to gather the products of these wild-bee hives.

One of the special features of many Latvian farms is fields of blue flax flowers. When the flax is ripe for plucking, everybody on the farm is needed to help gather in the harvest. Indeed, it is usual on such occasions for friends and neighbours to offer to help. When the day's work is over, the farmer's wife provides a grand meal for these friends, and all make merry. A dance usually follows the meal, the music being provided by a fiddle and an accordion. Such an occasion is described by the Latvians as a "Talka." The preparation of the flax for use provides plenty of work during the winter months for the menfolk. Moreover, much wood is needed for the fires as well as for building purposes, and groups of them must go into the forest to collect it.

In the meantime the women too are not idle. They spin wool and flax, and weave it into very

Latvia

durable material. Some of the ancient patterns are still woven into the material. These patterns are chiefly geometrical, the swastika often being seen. Unfortunately the picturesque national costumes are not much worn today in Latvia, but in some parts of the province of Kurzeme the women still wear them. The costume consists of bright red or black full skirts with white blouses richly embroidered, over which an embroidered shawl is thrown. The head-dress is curious and is usually highly decorated with coloured beads or bright metal ornaments. The chief food of the poorer peasants consists of potatoes and milk and black bread. On the larger farms such as we have been describing, the food will be much richer and more varied.

Although the peasants live on isolated farms, schools are provided for the children, and there is, in fact, practically no illiteracy in the country except amongst the Polish and Lithuanian minorities. Besides Poles and Lithuanians there are large German and Russian minorities, and special schools are provided wherever necessary for such people, so that their children may be taught in the language which they are accustomed to speak at home.

Latvians at Play

CHAPTER V

LATVIANS AT PLAY

“HARD weeks, merry holidays,” is a Latvian saying which suggests that if the people know how to work hard they also know how to enjoy themselves.

The chief Latvian holiday is St. John’s Eve, June 22, or Lihgo’s Day, as it is also called. Lihgo was a pagan goddess whose festival was celebrated at midsummer, when she was worshipped by the Latvians before they became Christians. When Christianity was introduced, the name of St. John was substituted for that of Lihgo, but although no one knows anything about Lihgo or how she was worshipped, songs are still sung in her honour as they were sung, probably, thousands of years ago.

St. John’s Day is a day of flowers and songs. On that day work ends earlier than usual. Wreaths are fashioned, for everyone must wear wreaths on this day. Not only so, but all the rooms in the house are decorated with fresh leaves. The farm hands, clad in their Sunday best, with wreaths on their heads and bundles of flowers in their hands, will present themselves before the house of their master, singing an ancient song which begins with the words :

Latvia

“Jahnit beat the drums of copper
Lihgo . . . Lihgo !”

There are innumerable verses to this song, but even so more will be improvised to make it last longer. When at last the farmer and his wife appear at the door of their house songs are sung in their praise, extolling the generosity and the good food they expect from them. Wreaths are then piled on their heads, and the more popular the master, the greater will be the number of wreaths. The wreaths are afterwards dried and kept for the winter as food for the cows. For it is an old Latvian superstition that flowers and herbs picked on St. John's Eve possess miraculous powers.

Drink and bread and cheese and fat pork will then be handed round to the singers by the farmer and his wife.

But the chief fun of the evening is yet to come. When all have eaten their fill they proceed to some high ground in the neighbourhood of the farm and there set light to large barrels of tar. If anyone possesses an old pistol he is certain to discharge it at intervals in order to add to the general din and uproar. The young people will try to jump over the fire, the idea being that they are jumping from the first half to the second half of the year. All round the countryside these fires are to be seen, and indeed in the towns and cities as well. In Riga, for instance, it is the custom to

Latvians at Play

tie the barrels to the lamp-posts, while the ships in the harbour will be gaily decorated with flowers.

With fresh wreaths and flowers and singing as they go, the revellers will then proceed to neighbouring farms, where the same ceremonies are repeated. Sometimes five or six farms will be visited ere the party returns home. But by this time night will have turned into day and the early morning sun will be brightly shining.

Another Latvian festival is St. Andrew's Day, on November 29. On this day it is the custom for the young people to wear masks, very often in imitation of animals' heads. Disguised in this way they will visit their friends, who have great fun in trying to guess who has come to see them. Many amusing superstitions are connected with this festival. For instance, the young girls will go to the garden gate and throw a shoe behind their heads over the gate, and then look to see which way the toe has fallen. This is supposed to indicate the direction from which their future husbands will come. Another custom on St. Andrew's Day is for the girls to go up to a strange man and ask him his name. The name he gives is supposed to be the name of the future husband.

Latvia has two All Fools' Days. For not only is April 1 observed in this way, but April 30 as well. In the same way every child has two "birthdays." Or

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rather, not only is the birthday celebrated, but each child has a "Name Day" as well. Thus, every boy whose name is John celebrates his Name Day on June 24, and every girl whose name is Mary celebrates her Name Day on July 22. Thus everybody knows when your Name Day is, as they have only to look on a special calendar which gives the Name Days. All one's friends call to offer congratulations, and perhaps to give small presents, so that one generally has a big party on this day. On both the Name Day and the birthday the chair of the one whose festival it is will be gaily decorated with flowers, and so also will be the doorway of the house. A special cake, made somewhat in the form of two circles joined together, is prepared. As with us, there are candles to represent the age of the person whose birthday is being celebrated, but in addition there is an extra big candle which is supposed to represent all the birthdays which are to come in the future.

There are special songs which are sung in honour of both Name Days and birthdays. Early in the morning the person to be honoured is awakened by such a song being sung by his or her friends. Sometimes the friends will come soon after midnight, so as to be certain that they are the first to greet their friend.

As all the world over, weddings are the occasions of special festivities. There are certain interesting customs

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connected with Latvian weddings. When the wedding party drives to the church, for instance, the bride's sisters have to present the young men who are acting as "marshals" during the ceremony with brightly coloured gloves. It is the duty of the "marshals" to escort on horseback the long row of carriages, and to fire pistol shots into the air as they go. This custom of using fire-arms is believed to be a survival of the days when the bride had to be carried off more or less by force, and when the bridegroom and his friends warned off the pursuers by using their arms.

Another custom that is also a survival of the past is that of bringing the wedding party to a standstill by drawing a rope across the road. The party is only allowed to proceed on its way after it has paid "toll," by giving the neighbours a drink. The ceremony at the church is followed by a feast and a dance in the house of the bride's parents.

LITHUANIA

CHAPTER VI

LITHUANIA AND HER STORY

THE Lithuanians are rightly proud of the fact that theirs is the oldest language in Europe. It is believed by some that, before the dawn of history, the Lithuanians and the Greeks, as part of the Aryan family, lived by the shores of the Caspian Sea. Later they separated, the Greeks going to the south and the Lithuanians moving northwards towards the Baltic. The first mention of them in history is made by Tacitus, who praises their agricultural methods.

It is not till the eleventh century that we know anything very definite about the history of Lithuania. We hear then of the struggles of the Lithuanians with their Russian neighbours, and of unsuccessful attempts by missionaries to convert them to Christianity.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century there arose the first of the great Lithuanian rulers. His name was Rimgaudas, Grand Duke of Lithuania. He it was who welded the various Lithuanian tribes into one

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nation. He was succeeded by Ardvila, who waged war successfully against the Tartars. His successor, Mindaugas, was the first Lithuanian Grand Duke to be converted to Christianity, but although his nobles were also baptized, the Lithuanians as a whole remained pagans. A large part of Mindaugas's reign was taken up with repulsing attacks by the Teutonic Knights. The Knights were severely repulsed in 1261, but Mindaugas shortly afterwards fell a victim to assassination. His death was followed by twenty years of civil strife, until at last another ruler named Vitenis succeeded in obtaining power and inflicting a decisive defeat upon the Teutonic Order.

Vitenis was succeeded by Gediminas, perhaps the most powerful man who ever governed Lithuania. He was a very tolerant ruler, and invited Western artists and artisans to come to Lithuania to teach the Lithuanians their arts and crafts. He encouraged learning and accepted the co-operation of the Franciscan and Dominican friars in the task of educating his people. He himself, however, never became a Christian, and to those who suggested he should leave his pagan faith he replied : "We have all one god, so why speak to me of the Christians ? Where can you find more crimes, more injustice, more acts of violence, corruption and usury than among the Christians ?" His answer reveals the fact that the Christians with whom the

Lithuania and her Story

Lithuanians came into contact in those days were largely corrupt, and were certainly not true followers of their Master, the Prince of Peace.

As the Teutonic Order continued to make forays into Lithuania, Gediminas led his army against them and successfully repulsed them. So successful was he, indeed, that he extended his dominions to the east as far as the Dnieper, and to the south as far as the Black Sea.

It is Gediminas who is said to have founded the city of Vilna. Legend says that he was out hunting one day and strayed so far from his residence that he had to sleep at the place where he had slain the animal he had been pursuing. As the result of a dream he had that night he decided to build a city there, and it stands today on the hill overlooking the valley where he slept.

After the death of Gediminas his two sons, Algirdas and Keistutis, divided the empire between them, Algirdas ruling the eastern section and Keistutis the western. The younger brother, Keistutis, was the more popular of the two, and he is still regarded as one of the national heroes of Lithuania. Many are the stories and legends told of Keistutis. One of these tells how, during his fights with the Teutonic Order, he was taken prisoner. He, however, managed to escape, and sent his captor the following message :

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"Thanks for your kind reception. But if I should have the honour of welcoming you under similar conditions I should know how to guard you better."

Despite many difficulties within and without, it was during the reign of the two brothers that the Lithuanian Empire reached its greatest limits, its boundaries extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

On the death of Algirdas another period of civil strife ensued between his son Jagellon and Vytautas, the son of Keistutis. Keistutis himself was the victim of foul play, and was discovered strangled. Eventually Jagellon became King of Poland by marrying the Polish Queen, Hedwig, and Vytautas soon had Lithuania to himself. It was under Vytautas that the Lithuanians succeeded in driving back the Tartar hordes. Vytautas was, however, so just that the Tartars afterwards agreed to accept him as arbitrator in their disputes with one another.

Vytautas, who died in 1430, was the last of the great Lithuanian rulers. Those who succeeded him were none of them so able as he.

In 1569 Lithuania and Poland were definitely united under one king, much against the wishes of the Lithuanian nation, who wished to retain their independence. Lithuania, however, retained a separate administration, a right she maintained until the end of

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the eighteenth century. When Poland ceased for more than a century to exist as a nation, and was divided between Russia, Germany, and Austria, Lithuania shared a similar fate. For more than a century she suffered oppression under the iron heel of Tsarist Russia.

At first the Russian Government allowed the Lithuanian nobles certain privileges, but when, in 1831, many of them joined with the Poles in trying to secure their country's liberty, they were mercilessly punished, and the people were forbidden to write or teach in the Lithuanian language. The University of Vilna was suppressed, and so were the parish schools. No Lithuanians were allowed to hold state or professional appointments in their own country, so that the few Lithuanians who succeeded in obtaining education in the public schools were obliged to emigrate to Russia to find employment. So strict were the regulations against Lithuanian teaching that if two or three children were found being taught together by one mistress she was punished with the utmost severity. The only "schoolmasters" were the mothers and a few travelling women teachers.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 resulted in the Lithuanians gaining certain rights in regard to the use of the Lithuanian language, and from then onwards more and more Lithuanians sought education. As a

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result of this there grew up a national literature as well as the growth of a number of Lithuanian newspapers and magazines.

Then came the Great War. As we have already seen, before it drew to a close there occurred the Bolshevik Revolution. At that time Lithuania was occupied by the Germans, but the Lithuanians were doing all they could to secure the independence of their country.

During 1918 and 1919 Lithuania was partly occupied and overrun by both Germans and Bolsheviks. The Lithuanians, Poles and Latvians combined to try to hold up the advancing Bolshevik troops. The Poles, however, occupied Vilna, which the Lithuanians regarded as their capital. This led to a bitter struggle between the Poles and Lithuanians, and although peace was soon afterwards restored between Lithuania and her German and Russian neighbours, no solution was found in regard to the dispute between the Poles and Lithuanians. The League of Nations tried to settle the dispute, but although it was able to put a stop to actual hostilities between the two countries, it has so far not been able to help them to come to a settlement of their quarrel, and Vilna is still held by the Poles. So the frontiers between the two countries remain closed, and no trade is carried on between them. We must hope that the day is not far distant when Poland and

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Lithuania will settle their differences and become friends once more.

CHAPTER VII

TOWN LIFE IN LITHUANIA

WHEN Lithuania first claimed her independence she made her capital at Vilna, the city which had been the capital of Lithuania at the time of the country's greatest expansion in the middle ages. But, as we have seen, the Poles claimed and occupied the city, and so the Lithuanians have had to choose another city as their capital. They chose Kovno, or Kaunas as it is now called. But as they do not admit that the Poles have a right to Vilna they call Kaunas their temporary capital.

It was not a particularly pleasant town when the Lithuanian Government first made their headquarters there. It had been used by the Russians as a small garrison town. There were many small, squalid, cobbled streets, no good roads and no proper drainage system. There were hardly any good buildings that could be used as Government and other offices, and indeed almost the whole city needed to be built anew.

Already Kaunas has been transformed and is beginning to look more like a small European capital. Some

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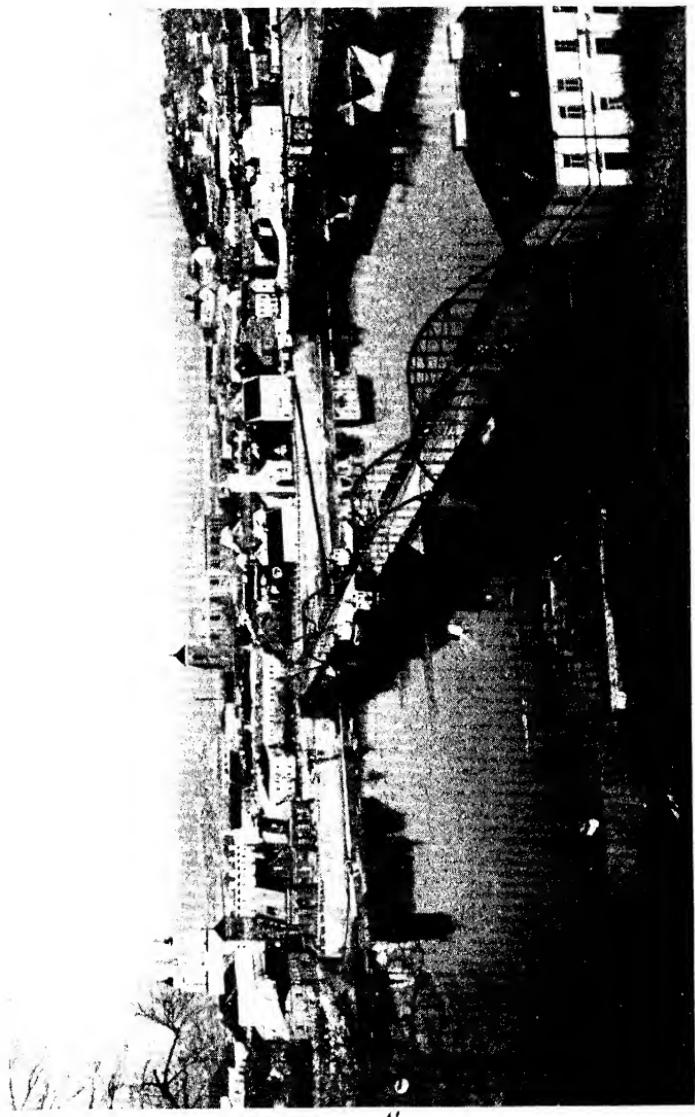
fine new buildings have been erected, including a new University. A modern drainage system has been introduced, extensive road repairs carried out, and large new blocks of modern flats erected.

Although so much of the town was uninteresting and needed re-building, it has one or two interesting old churches, and the town itself is well situated. It has been likened to Bath because, like that city, it is encircled by hills. One of the hills is known as Napoleon's Hill, because from that hill Napoleon watched his army file past him on his way to Moscow.

The biggest church in the town is one built by the Russians and dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. It faces the fine main street of the city, which has been renamed Liberty Avenue. Much more interesting than this church, however, is the beautiful church of red brick built by Vytautas on the banks of the River Nemunas. There is also a beautiful church built by the Jesuits, but although this is perhaps the finest in Kaunas it is built in the Italian style, and is not so truly Lithuanian as the other.

One of the pleasing features of the town is the small orchards attached to the little wooden houses which make up a large part of Kaunas. In the late spring these flowering trees make a pretty picture.

There are a great number of Jews in Kaunas, and in the Ghetto, or Jewish quarter of the city, you may still



KAUNAS, THE CAPITAL OF LITHUANIA

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see Jews wearing their gabardines, or long black coats, which distinguish them from their Gentile neighbours.

But the centre of Lithuanian life in Kaunas is perhaps their war memorial. It is a strange and simple memorial, half pagan and half Christian. In the old pagan days the chief god worshipped by the Lithuanians was named Perkunas, whose symbol was thunder and lightning. For this reason even today fire has a special significance for the Lithuanians. The war memorial consists of a simple cairn of stones in a rose garden cared for by invalid soldiers. The monument is surmounted by a typical Lithuanian cross. At the foot of the monument is a stone altar made after the fashion of the old Lithuanian pagan altars, with the inscription "Render what thou owest."

Every evening at sunset a simple ceremony takes place at the cairn when the ex-service men pay homage to their fallen comrades. The signal is given by a trumpeter from the tower of the War Museum. His trumpet call is answered by military music as the ex-service men march into the rose garden, and at the same time a fire is lighted on the altar and the cross above is illuminated, whilst, with bared heads, the men stand to attention as the Lithuanian National Anthem is played.

There are not many other towns of importance in Lithuania apart from Memel, about which we shall have something to say later on. Of the others the most

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important are Panevezys, Mariampole, Vilkmergė, and Siauliai.

It is in the towns, of course, that the industries of the country are carried on. The chief industries of Lithuania, as is natural in the case of an agricultural and timber-producing country, are connected with the preparation and preserving of foodstuffs and with the manufacture of wooden articles. She has, however, another and somewhat unique industry. This is the collection and preparation of amber. For it is from the Baltic Sea that nearly all the amber in the world is procured.

The Lithuanians have a very charming legend to tell as to how the amber comes to be washed up on their seashore. Long, long ago, they say, the Baltic was ruled by the sea goddess, Jurate, who lived in a wonderful palace of pure amber in the depths of the sea. One day her messenger, a pike, came in great agitation to tell her that a youth, named Kastytis, was killing the fish, her subjects, by hundreds. Greatly angered, the goddess called together her mermaids, and she and they, riding on a hundred white sea-horses, rode to the old Lithuanian seaport of Sventoji, where they found Kastytis mending his nets. The maidens with their songs charmed him into the sea, where he would certainly have been drowned had not Jurate had pity on him. She indeed fell in love with him, and every sun-

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set she would visit him. But Perkunas, the fire god, was displeased, and sent a thunderbolt which killed her and smashed her palace into a million pieces. Kastytis he bound to a rock at the bottom of the sea. When the western winds blow and the waves rise high a hoarse moaning is heard, and this, say the Lithuanians, is Kastytis mourning for Jurate. When the winds die down and the waves are at rest the seashore is strewn with fragments of the palace of Jurate.

CHAPTER VIII

LITHUANIAN VILLAGE LIFE

UNLIKE their Latvian and Estonian neighbours, the Lithuanians like to live in villages rather than on isolated farms. This is due to their long association with Russia, from whom they have borrowed this and other customs.

Most villages consist of about fifteen to thirty houses, with a great number of barns and cattle sheds. For although the villagers are mostly small farmers, they do not always have their fields around the house. Instead, each field will be divided into long, narrow strips, and each farmer has one strip in each field. This means that sometimes the farmer and his family will have to

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walk some miles to and fro between their house and the farthest strip, which involves a good deal of wasted time and energy. The system is a survival of the old Russian custom whereby a village owned land collectively. As it is a wasteful system the Lithuanian Government is encouraging the farmers to agree to divide the land in such a way that they will be able to have compact farms. Many are glad to make the change, and gradually the old system is giving way before the new. Most of the houses are built of wooden logs, and are generally either thatched or have roofs also of wood.

As in Latvia, the larger farms consist of a number of buildings. The chief building is called the "Namas," although perhaps the most interesting is the "Kletis," or storehouse. But in the olden days it was much more than a storehouse, for it was there that the girls of the household had their bedrooms.

In the smaller peasants' cottages one finds wooden benches ranged against the walls, and near the entrance a large stove surrounded by a ledge or perhaps a bench. From the ceiling, attached to a branch, will probably be a long basket made of birch boughs. This is the baby's cradle. As the branch is very elastic it can be easily rocked whilst mother is busy with her household tasks, and there is no fear of the baby falling, as the basket is so deep and is very securely tied to the branch.

There will be articles of carved wood and pictures of

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various kinds in the room. Lithuanians have always been celebrated for this kind of work. Three hundred years ago a writer, speaking of their skill in carving, said : "The Lithuanian rides on horseback into the forest and returns therefrom in a coach."

Lithuanians are very fond of music, and almost every house has its "kanklys," a kind of zither. Like other objects in the house, this will also be elaborately carved. Whatever work the Lithuanian peasant is doing he is sure to sing about it. When he ploughs his fields he sings about his straight furrow and the lark above his head. When he sows his seed he sings of the promise of his seed, and when he reaps his harvest, of the golden corn. The girls bleaching the linen they have spun sing of the dower chest they are getting ready for their marriage ; the old women sing of their children and of how lonely they feel now that they have left to make homes of their own elsewhere. The men who bring the timber from the great forests on rafts down the river sing of the forests from which they have come. When the day's work is over and the people gather together for recreation, they will sing together. They sing as they bathe, and the youths sing round the camp fires at night.

One of the things you are sure to see in a Lithuanian village is a tall and elaborately carved wooden cross. These crosses are typically Lithuanian, and are quite different from those found elsewhere. Many of them

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are very old. One reason why they are not found in the other Baltic States is that Lithuania is Roman Catholic, whilst Latvia and Estonia are both Protestant countries. In one place in Lithuania there is a hill where there are more than two hundred crosses that have been erected as thank-offerings by different people at various times. There is a curious legend to explain how the first cross came to be there. It is said that there was once a church on the hill, but that, because of the misdeeds of the people, it sank underground, leaving only the cross on its steeple exposed. No one dared approach the hill until one day an old blind woman dreamed that she must bathe her eyes in the rivulet at its foot, and pray under the cross. She did so, and, according to the legend, recovered her sight, and as a thank-offering placed a cross on the hill. Others followed her example, until today the hill is covered with a whole forest of crosses.

As a matter of fact, in any Lithuanian village you will hear legends of this kind about local hills and trees and lakes. Almost all the two thousand Lithuanian lakes have their own legends. According to these, some of the lakes came down from the sky, others came up from the earth. Some are reputed to be able to travel at will with all their fish. In some there are said to be sunken bells, which toll solemnly during storms, and in others there are churches and castles and even

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whole towns. Even large stones, which are rare in Lithuania, have each their own legend. Some of them are supposed once to have been people, whilst others have the power of travelling about. One such stone, on the banks of the River Sventoji, is said to have stood long ago on the opposite bank. But because some little herd boys treated it with small respect it determined to cross to the other bank. It did so in twelve days and nights, weeping bitterly the while because its "wife" had sunk in the river, leaving only her head exposed.

The Lithuanian peasant, like the Lithuanian town dweller, has given up his national costume. In some places, however, the women still wear their beautiful national dress. This consists of a short woollen, many-coloured, striped or check skirt, with a white blouse and a tight embroidered sleeveless bodice. They wear fine white handkerchiefs on their heads and usually have a number of rings of silver, tin, or brass on their hands. If they do their hair in the real Lithuanian fashion, it will be elaborately plaited, but, of course, as elsewhere, many Lithuanian peasant girls have bobbed or shingled hair today. For in the Lithuanian village, as in the villages of other countries, many changes are taking place, some for better and some for worse. But whatever changes take place it is to be hoped that the Lithuanian peasant will never lose his sense of beauty and artistic skill.

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CHAPTER IX

SOME LITHUANIAN CUSTOMS

MANY of the customs which are still observed in Lithuania, particularly in the villages, can be traced back to pagan times.

A favourite and purely Lithuanian festival is the feast of "Vainikinas," or binding of wreaths, which takes place during July. On this day, towards sunset, the young people of the village go to the forest, where they gather flowers which they make into wreaths. Adorned with these, they then go in search of two young birch trees or two young lime trees. These they entwine together to form a primitive triumphal arch. The young people then divide into couples and pass through the arch, the men by themselves and the girls by themselves. When they meet after passing through the arch, they kiss and sing :

"Bless us, O goddess,
Youthful swain and maiden,
Steadfast friends the two."

Another quaint old custom is connected with the harvest festival. After the harvest has been gathered in, the big farms keep open house for the harvesters and their families. The harvesters form a procession

Some Lithuanian Customs

to the farmer's house, led by the prettiest girl amongst them, who carries on a plate a wreath made of ears of corn and covered over with a white cloth. As they proceed to the house they sing a song which tells how they have rescued the farmer's corn from a huge bison that would have destroyed it (probably meant to signify the winter), and of how they succeeded in driving it away and bringing the rye safely into the barn. Then the girls sing a song in honour of the farmer and his family. When the farmer appears the wreath is presented to him, and after thanking everybody he gives all the girls a little present, the girl who gave the wreath getting the best one. Then one of the farm hands makes a speech on behalf of his fellow-labourers, after which all are invited to make merry at the farm, where a feast is awaiting them, and the evening ends with dancing and games and singing.

Some of the Lithuanian folk dances are very beautiful, for the Lithuanians have a remarkable sense of rhythm. One dance, known as the dance of the hat, is only performed by men, whilst another, known as the dance of the rue, is performed only by girls. One of the most beautiful of the old dances is called the dance of the swallow, and is a survival of a pagan festival in honour of the sun and the spring. The couples taking part in this dance take up their positions in two sets facing each other. Then they swing round, bend down,

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and pass through the other set, quick as a flash, and in a way that does suggest a swallow's twisting and rapid flight. As they dance the following song is sung :

" Little brothers, sisters too,
Fly, oh, fly away
Into grooves so green
Fly, oh, fly away.
Furr—furr—swallow wild,
Furr—furr—swift of wing,
No hunter seeks to kill thee,
No one will do thee harm.
Furr—furr—swallow wild,
Furr—furr—swift of wing."

Probably in no country in Europe are there such quaint and elaborate customs connected with marriage as in Lithuania. Formerly the wedding festivities lasted a whole week, but the ceremonials are usually much more simplified today, so that some of the old customs are dying out. Even today, however, marriages in the country are largely arranged by the parents, though the young people have much greater freedom of choice than in the old days, and sometimes the part which the parents play is more that of giving their blessing to the arrangement which the young people have already made. If the two young people wish to marry, the young man, after consulting his parents, will send a friend to the house of the girl to see if the parents are willing for the marriage to take place.

Some Lithuanian Customs

There is always a good deal of singing connected with these preliminary arrangements. A week or so before the wedding, the friends of the bride assemble in her house and the friends of the bridegroom meet in his house. Both bride and bridegroom have each their own messenger, who must personally convey to the friends and relatives the invitation to be present at the wedding. At these gatherings the bearers of the invitations and their horses are decked with ribbons and foliage amid much jesting and merriment. The messengers are generally chosen for their wit and ability to make amusing speeches, for at each house they must make such a speech. The day before the wedding the young girls of the village meet at the bride's house for what is called "The Maiden's Evening." They decorate her head with rue, the Lithuanian symbol of purity, and fine flowers, and sing sad songs. Later there is dancing and music in the house, but the bride does not join in it.

In the meantime the friends of the bridegroom have assembled at his house, where there is also dancing and music. Late in the evening the bridegroom and his friends set out on horseback to fetch the bride. He is supposed to have to fetch her by force, a playful survival of the days when brides were really seized by force. In order to frustrate the designs of the bridegroom, the brothers of the bride and their friends do

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all they can to impede his progress. Boards and trunks of trees are placed across the road and a network of tarred ropes drawn across the gate. When they reach the gate the bridegroom's party is not allowed to enter, but after a mock struggle one member, probably the one who acted as messenger, manages to enter, and asks for permission for the bridegroom to come in. But permission is not given until the messenger has answered a number of nonsensical questions, and the more absurd the answers he gives the better pleased will the company be. When at last permission is given the bridegroom and his friends must first pay the girls for their seats in the house with presents of meat and bread. *

The bride meantime is hidden under a many-coloured rug in the best room, her girl friends forming a guard of honour round her. One of the bridegroom's friends is allowed to creep under the hangings and in the darkness seize the bride. If he seizes the wrong girl he must try again until he gets the right one.

After the wedding ceremony the next morning the married couple call at the bride's house, so that she may bid farewell to her parents before they set out in a carriage, decked with garlands of flowers, to the bridegroom's house.

Memel, or Klaipeda

CHAPTER X

MEMEL, OR KLAIPEDA

MORE than seven hundred years ago there stood, by the shores of the Baltic Sea, a fortress built by the Lithuanians and called by them Klaipeda. This was in the days of the wild sea rovers, and the fortress was built as a protection against their forays. The Teutonic Knights, however, succeeded in destroying the Lithuanian fortress, and in 1252 they built one of their own nearby, giving it the name of Memelburg. Around this new fortress there very soon grew up the town of Memel. The new town flourished and became a member of the Hanseatic League. But its life was a stormy one. Not only the Lithuanians but the Poles as well tried to gain possession of the town, and from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries it was many times burned to the ground, and several times changed hands. Then it and the adjacent territory were finally ceded to the Teutonic Order, and for about two hundred years it remained under their sway. But in the seventeenth century the Swedes obtained possession, and not long afterwards they were succeeded by the Russians. Later the Russians were succeeded by the Germans, in whose control the town remained until the Great War.

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When the war was over Memel again changed hands. The allied countries could not agree for some time as to what country it should be given to. The inhabitants in the town of Memel itself were mostly Germans, but the people in the countryside immediately surrounding it were mostly Lithuanians. For several years, whilst the Allies were trying to decide what to do, the territory was governed on their behalf by a French High Commissioner. Eventually the Lithuanian inhabitants, tired of the long delay, took over the government of the territory themselves. This led to a dispute with the Allies, but happily the League of Nations was asked to settle it, and the League suggested a way out of the difficulty which everybody agreed to.

By this agreement Memel, or Klaipeda as the Lithuanians have decided to call it, has been made a self-governing territory under the sovereignty of Lithuania. The inhabitants have been given the right to elect a Chamber of Representatives, which makes local laws. The Lithuanian Government appoints a Governor of the territory, and he has the right to appoint the President of the Chamber of Representatives, and also to appoint five persons to carry on the work of government.

Because the port of Klaipeda is one that is needed for international trade as well as for the trade of Lithuania, a Harbour Board has been set up on which are repre-

Memel, or Klaipeda

sentatives not only of Lithuania and the Klaipeda territory, but of the League of Nations as well.

The territory of Klaipeda, which includes many villages as well as the town of Klaipeda itself, consists of eleven hundred square miles. The territory stretches for some miles along the coast as well as extending some distance inland. The harbour stands at the neck of a curious inland sea called the Kurisches Haff, which is formed by a narrow sandy shoal sixty miles long but only about a mile broad. This sand-bar is covered with pine trees, and the sand itself is fine white, wind-sifted powder, so that it makes an ideal bathing beach. In the pine woods several herds of elk are preserved, a beast now found very rarely elsewhere in Europe.

The town of Klaipeda itself is small, but clean and well paved. It is the only important port for Lithuanian produce. But because it used to belong to Germany there were, until a few years ago, no railway lines linking Klaipeda direct with Kaunas and other Lithuanian towns. So that new railway lines are being built by the Lithuanian Government, and various improvements carried out for making the harbour larger and more up to date.

The chief exports from Klaipeda are timber and flax, but the port is also one of the very few in the world from which amber is exported. For the stretch of coast in the Memel territory is the centre of the world's

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chief supply of amber. As we have already seen, this part of the Baltic coast has from time immemorial supplied the world with amber. It is an interesting fact that an amber necklace was found in the tomb of Tutankhamen which probably came all the way from Lithuania. For the Egyptian word for amber is *sakai*, which is the Lithuanian word for resin or gum, and the Latvian word for amber. Perhaps, despite the charming legend which the Lithuanians tell as to the origin of amber, they had even in those far-away days discovered a similarity between amber and gum. For amber is really petrified gum from the pine trees which, before the Ice Age, covered a stretch of land over which the Baltic Sea now flows. "

ESTONIA

CHAPTER XI

ESTONIA AND THE ESTONIANS

THE story of Estonia does not differ greatly from that of her neighbour, Latvia. She too was dominated in turn by the Teutonic Knights and by Russia. Her written story, however, begins with a struggle with the Danes. For two of her principal towns—Tallinn, the capital, and Narva on the Russian frontier—were founded by the Danes. The Danish king Waldemar II. undertook a crusade against the Estonians, and in 1219 he founded the town of Reval, or Tallinn to give it its Estonian name. But the Estonians had no desire to be ruled by a foreign king, and they were constantly in revolt, until at last one of the Danish kings, Waldemar IV., was glad to get rid of his troublesome subjects for the sum of 19,000 marks, which he obtained from the German Knights who, fifty years before, had conquered a certain part of the land.

Few towns have had so stormy a history as that of Narva, for it has changed hands no less than seven

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times. The town was founded in the thirteenth century by the Danes. The Teutonic Knights, however, seized it during the following century, only to be followed by the Russians two centuries later. Their rule on this occasion did not last long, for about twenty years later the town, together with the rest of Estonia and most of Latvia, was captured by the Swedes. Then in the eighteenth century the Russians gained possession, to be followed during the Great War first by the Germans and then for the third time by the Russians. Now for the first time the whole of Estonia is under Estonian rule, and we must hope a happier and more peaceful future is in store for the country.

But long before Estonia had gained her liberty, Estonian men, and women too, had been making the history of their country. The Estonian language, like the Latvian, was a forbidden tongue for many years, so that it was difficult for a national literature to develop. Yet despite the dangers there were not wanting brave men and women who wrote books and founded newspapers in the Estonian language.

One of the greatest of these was a woman named Lydia Jannsen, who wrote under the pen-name of Koidula. She was born in 1843, and learned very early in life to take a passionate interest in the sufferings of her country. Her father, J. W. Jannsen, had founded

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the oldest newspaper, still existing, in Estonia, and from him she learned much of the political struggles of her country.

When still very young she gave promise of becoming a writer. In those days it was almost unheard of for a woman to take up journalistic work, yet on leaving school she became her father's chief assistant. Then, when she was only twenty-four years of age, she published two small books of songs. One of these, called "Emmajõe Öpik," is composed of poems about Estonia that are full of beauty and have made her name unforgettable amongst her fellow-countrymen. Koidula married a few years later, but twelve years afterwards, when she was only forty-two, she died.

It is interesting to note that one of the foremost Estonian writers today is also a woman, Marie Under.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth the Estonians made several attempts to gain greater liberty. In this heroic struggle many Estonians, who have since held high office in their country, suffered imprisonment. M. Jaan Teemant, who for several years was head of the state, was actually condemned to death by the Russian Government. But fortunately he was in hiding and so the sentence could not be carried out. As a reprisal, however, the farm belonging to his father, who was

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very old, was burned to the ground. The first Prime Minister of Estonia, M. Konstantin Päts, was also condemned to death in 1905, but he too was able to escape. Twelve years later he was imprisoned by the Germans when they occupied the country during the war. As soon as he was released he became Prime Minister and Minister of War, and had to organize the resistance to the Bolshevik invasion. The general who led the Estonians against the Bolsheviks was General J. Laidoner. Later on he was destined to act as one of the Estonian delegates to the League of Nations Assembly. For, like most other soldiers who know how terrible modern warfare is, he was ready to do all he could to prevent another war.

Like her neighbours, Estonia is a Republic. As with us, her laws are made by the national Parliament, and women as well as men are members of Parliament. There is no state religion, but most of the inhabitants are Protestants. Despite the fact that, until the country gained its independence, there were many difficulties in regard to education in Estonia, and it was moreover not then compulsory, there are today very few who cannot read and write, and these are almost all very old people. In some parts of the country it has been necessary to provide evening schools for grown-up people as well as many new schools for boys and girls. Despite all these difficulties Estonia has proportionately

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more people who have had a University education than any other country of the world, and of this fact she is justly proud.

CHAPTER XII

SOME ESTONIAN TOWNS

SOMEONE has said that although the countryside of the three Baltic States is very similar, it would be difficult to find three capitals more unlike one another than Riga, Kaunas, and Tallinn. Kaunas is largely Russian, Riga is chiefly German, but Tallinn baffles description, for it is unique. •

Tallinn has something of the fascination of an Eastern city. One would think that it was the capital of a mountainous country instead of one for the most part flat. For it is built on a small steep hill. Its narrow, cobbled streets lead one to stone stairs beneath arching gateways, which one must climb to reach the summit of the hill on which stands the old Danish castle built by Waldemar II. This castle is built on the site of an early Danish settlement established there in 1093 by Eric IV. of Denmark on a still earlier Estonian settlement.

As one wanders through the streets of the old town one comes across all kinds of surprising and queer

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buildings. So different are the styles of building to be found side by side that, looking down on the city from the castle walls, one gets the impression of a riot of colour. It is this, together with the narrow crooked streets and overhanging balconies of the quaint houses, that has caused one traveller to liken the city to Algiers, another to Pekin. Happily for visitors to the town, however, Tallinn has none of the dirt and smells of an Eastern city !

Near the castle are two churches that, like so many buildings in this town of strange contrasts, are just as different from one another as they can be. One is a big modern Russian cathedral with five gilded domes, which is on the top of the hill ; the other is a severely dignified old church, known as St. Olaf's, in the lower part of the town, and which was built by the Danes. Its grim grey walls rise high above the surrounding buildings and entirely dominate them. Its tower with a pointed spire is four hundred and fifty-six feet high, and in the days when the town belonged to Russia it was the highest tower in the Russian Empire.

The old Town Hall, or Rathaus, which is at the foot of the hill on which the castle is built, is another quaint and interesting building. The body of the building is truly Northern, for it is in the heavy Gothic style, but the delicate tower which rises from it might be some Eastern minaret, so fanciful is it. A legend says



TALLINN, THE TOWN HALL.

Some Estonian Towns

that the architect who built the tower in the fourteenth century had been a prisoner among the Turks or Persians, and this might account for its Eastern appearance.

Near the Town Hall is the oldest chemist's shop in Europe. The pharmacy was founded in 1422 and has occupied its present site since 1461. What tragedies must the old shop have seen, and how many people with beating hearts must have crossed its threshold to seek aid for their dear ones during all these centuries !

There are many interesting old churches in Tallinn apart from the two we have mentioned on the castle hill, or Domberg as it is called. They look something like fortresses, so grim and sombre are they.

Encircling the hill on which the castle stands are the walls of the city. At frequent intervals one comes across a tower, for the wall boasts no less than seventeen mural towers, four gate towers, as well as several others. The largest of the fortress towers is known as Long Herman, and is the watch tower of the castle itself. Facing it is the Swedish Bastion, built by the Swedes in the seventeenth century.

Outside the gates of the city has grown up the modern town, and it is only here that one finds trams and motor-buses and big modern buildings. One of the most important of these is the Estonian

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Theatre, for this was the centre of Estonian national life immediately before the war, and it was in the Estonian Theatre that the independence of the country was declared in 1917.

Estonia can boast one of the oldest Universities in Northern Europe, if one excepts our own ancient Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The University of Dorpat, or Tartu as it is called in Estonia, was founded by the Swedes in the seventeenth century. It resembles the German University of Heidelberg more than our beautiful University towns. For, as at Heidelberg, the main University building is a plain, uninteresting looking building, whose interior reminds one more of an old school building than an Oxford or Cambridge college. As in the case of Heidelberg, too, the chief attraction for the foreign visitor is the old student prisons. The prisons are small rooms built in a huge loft in which, right up to the outbreak of the Great War, it was customary to imprison students if they had broken a college regulation or were guilty of some other offence. "Ragging" of course was the most common offence. The old beds and tables are still there, but the most amazing thing about the rooms is that the walls and ceilings are entirely covered with rough pictures and cartoons painted by the students in order to while away the time. Today students who break the law are treated like other citizens.

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The University library, a very fine one, is housed in a much more picturesque building than the college itself. This is in the ruins of an old church that was destroyed by fire centuries ago.

The town is a delightfully quiet and peaceful place embedded in trees. One can well imagine that it is an ideal place in which to study. Like Tallinn, Tartu is also built on a hill that rises abruptly from the plains, but in other respects it is quite unlike the capital.

The most important industrial town in Estonia is Narva, on the Russian frontier. This strange, out-of-the-way town possesses the second largest cotton mill in the world. Narva is a small town and yet it is dominated by two strangely incongruous landmarks. One is the vast pile of modern buildings which comprise the Krenholm Cotton Mills. The other consists of two enormous medieval fortresses, both in strange contrast to one another. For one is Russian, and is built of grey granite, and the other is Swedish, and is built of red brick. They face each other across the narrow entrance to the harbour formed at the mouth of the River Narva.

Narva suffered terribly during the Great War and the War of Independence which immediately followed it. Ten years after this latter war there were still to be seen whole rows of houses ruined by shell-fire, whilst

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the surrounding countryside was dotted with shell-holes.

Of the other towns in Estonia the largest are Pärnu, Valk, Viljandi, and Rakvere. New townships are beginning to develop in the eastern part of the country, however, owing to the discovery of oil shale. Recent drillings and explorations have proved that Estonian oil shale is one of the oldest and richest in the world. It is expected that more will be discovered before long, thus adding greatly to the future wealth of the country.

CHAPTER XIII

ESTONIAN COUNTRY LIFE

ONE of the differences between Estonia and her neighbour is that Estonia has a great number of islands. Many of them are inhabited, and it is on the islands that the old customs are still observed and the old national peasant costumes are still worn. In some of the more remote villages on the mainland also the peasants still wear the costumes.

The national costumes vary slightly in different parts of the country and on the different islands. The most usual form of dress for women consists of a brightly coloured rather full striped skirt, either plain or pleated.

Estonian Country Life

A white blouse, also embroidered, with rather full sleeves is worn with the skirt, a tightly fitting sleeveless waistcoat, either red, blue, or grey, being sometimes worn over the blouse.

Like their Latvian neighbours, the Estonians prefer isolated farms to village life, though they are seemingly rather more sociable than the Latvians, and it is usual to find several farms grouped together within a stone's throw of one another. Although there is a great deal of similarity between Latvia and Estonia, this is not due to their being related to one another. For actually, although the Lithuanians and Latvians are cousins and belong, as we have seen, to the great Indo-European family of nations, the Estonians, on the other hand, are related to the Finns and to the Hungarians.

Like the Latvians, the Estonians have divided up the big estates that used to belong almost entirely to the Baltic Barons before the war, in order to give the peasants a share of the land. This is bringing about great changes in the lives of the people who live in the country. For in the old days most of the peasants worked on the great farms owned by the Barons and other big land-owners, whilst today many of them have little farms of their own. There were, of course, many Estonians who owned small farms before the war, and so today in Estonia people speak of the old type of farm and the new type of farm.

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Naturally the breaking up of the big estates was greatly resented by their former owners, and for a time there was a good deal of bitterness between the Estonians and the Baltic Barons. Happily the relations between the two peoples have now greatly improved, and both are working together for the good of their country. This has been greatly helped by a wise law passed by the Estonian Government, which gives the Germans and other "minority" peoples, as they are called, the right to have their children taught in their mother tongue, and indeed to manage their schools and museums and other cultural institutions for themselves. The law allows the Germans and other national groups to have what are called "cultural parliaments." These cultural parliaments make their own school and other regulations and have the right to impose taxes on those who belong to their particular national group. By the passing of this law Estonia has set an example to the rest of Europe which may have important results on the future peace of the world. For there are no less than fifty million people in Europe who form "minorities" in the countries where they live, and most of them are dissatisfied with their lot.

Much of the land that goes to make up the Estonian countryside cannot be used for growing crops, and is used as meadow land for sheep and cattle grazing. The chief crop grown by Estonian farmers is rye, though

ESTONIANS FOLK-DANCING IN NATIONAL COSTUME



Estonian Country Life

they also grow a certain amount of wheat and other cereals, potatoes, and flax.

The chief food of the poorer Estonian peasants consists of a kind of porridge made of barley, in the middle of which is put a piece of butter or boiled fat pork. But of course the peasant housewife prepares other dishes for the household as well.

Even in those parts of the country where the Estonian costume is no longer to be seen many old customs are still observed. Especially is this true of the old Christmas customs. One of these, which is almost universally observed, is that of preparing special Christmas bread. These little loaves are made in the form of children and pigs. *

On the islands some very quaint customs are observed at Christmas-time. One such is for people to disguise themselves, by means of skins or feathers, as sheep or geese. In this strange guise they will visit their friends and neighbours and wish them a merry Christmas. It is also the custom to decorate the table at Christmas-time with objects made of straw.

There are also special Estonian wedding customs. One of these is for the bride to give to each member of her fiancé's family a pair of gloves and a pair of stockings which she has made and embroidered herself. Where the family is a big one this is a heavy task, for the daughters of the household have to do their share

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of the work of the farm, and the bride must also prepare her own trousseau. This means that an Estonian peasant girl after she becomes engaged has to work particularly hard.

Like the Lithuanians, the Estonians are passionately fond of singing. The form which their love of song takes, however, is perhaps more like the Welsh Eisteddfod than the more casual and spontaneous singing of the Lithuanians, to which we have already referred. For every few years great Song Festivals are held in Estonia. During the intervening years in almost every village and town there is a choir preparing to take its part in the next Song Festival. The Song Festivals themselves, which are held in the open air, are very remarkable, for the choirs which assemble then are composed of about ten to fifteen thousand singers, and many tens of thousands of people, from all over the country, assemble to listen to them.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CHILDREN OF ESTONIA

As in Great Britain, all boys and girls in Estonia are obliged to go to school. But in Estonia they are not obliged to go till they are eight, and whilst they usually leave at fourteen, they can, if they reach the highest

The Children of Estonia

standard by the time they are twelve, leave then. On the other hand, if they do not reach the top standard by the time they are fourteen, they may have to remain at school till they are fifteen.

Estonian boys and girls are very clever at all kinds of handiwork, and in all elementary schools there are special classes for teaching them handicrafts. In the village schools they learn those kinds of handicrafts that are likely to be most useful to them when they leave school, and many of them learn something about gardening and simple agricultural work.

As in British schools, Estonian boys and girls are being taught a good deal about other countries, and they are encouraged to make friends with foreign children by means of correspondence. In many of the secondary schools they are taught to speak English, and in any case they must learn to speak at least one other language besides Estonian, because of course hardly anybody outside Estonia understands that language.

When Estonia first became an independent country after the war, and the children were able to be taught in their mother tongue, the teachers had a very difficult task in front of them, for there were scarcely any school books written in Estonian. So until the new books were written they had to invent ways of teaching without books. One of these methods was to let the children make their own school books by cutting out

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articles and pictures from Estonian newspapers and magazines, collecting foreign stamps and picture post-cards, and so on, as well as drawing maps and diagrams themselves. They made some very interesting albums and learnt so much from this kind of work that the teachers still use this method of teaching, although the need for it has long passed, and of course they now have school books as well. The method is used more particularly in teaching the children about foreign countries and international affairs. Very often the boys and girls learn to illustrate their albums very cleverly. For instance, in one school the pupils were told to write an essay and collect pictures on the Five-Power Naval Conference, and one of them decorated the cover of the album containing the essay with five doves, each of which was carrying in place of an olive branch the national flag of one of the five naval Powers.

Winter in Estonia is very long and the summer-time correspondingly short. But the few summer months from May to August are usually all that can be desired in the way of warm, sunny days, with nights that are almost as short as the Arctic summer nights. Everybody, therefore, makes the most of the short summer, and especially is everything done to enable children to make the most of it. There are numbers of children's summer colonies in the forests of Estonia, where children, more particularly those who are delicate, are

The Children of Estonia

sent, sometimes for a few weeks, sometimes for the whole summer, so that they may get strong and fit to meet the long, hard winter. Sometimes they have a few lessons at the colony, but for the most part they enjoy long holidays in the open air amid the pine trees.

One of the winter holidays corresponds somewhat to our Empire Day, except that the Estonian national day is a public holiday. This is February 24, the anniversary of the day on which the independence of Estonia was declared.

In the winter there are all kinds of winter sports which the children can enjoy, such as skating and tobogganing and ski-ing. Even the sea is frozen, as we have seen, for a short time in some places, so it is possible to play on the sea !

As in Great Britain, there are Girl Guides and Boy Scouts and other young people's societies. Many boys and girls belong to the Junior Red Cross, for the Red Cross Society has done a great deal of valuable work in the country, more particularly immediately after the war, when the country was very poor and the children needed special care. Today boys and girls are helping the Red Cross in many ways to carry on its splendid work. There is also a very strong temperance movement in Estonia, and young people take part in this too.

BALTIC FOLK STORIES

BALTIC FOLK STORIES

CHAPTER XV

LATVIAN : THE LITTLE WHITE DOG

ONCE upon a time there lived a girl, without father or mother, who had to work for her living in the house of an ill-tempered woman. No matter how hard she tried she could never please her.

One day she was sent to the well to get water without wetting her bucket. This seemed so impossible that the girl sat by the well and wept. Presently a Little White Dog came up to her and said : "If you will take me for your bridegroom I will fill your dry bucket with water." The girl promised, the dog filled the bucket as he had said, and vanished.

Not long afterwards a man came to the house and asked the woman if he might marry the girl. The woman, who wished to get rid of the girl, agreed, although the girl did not wish to marry the man. On the eve of the wedding the bridegroom arrived and all went forth to meet him. Who should they see outside the house as the bridegroom entered but the Little

Baltic Folk Stories

White Dog ! Because he was not let into the house
he began to sing :

“ Let me in, you pretty Maiden,
Me, your Mannikin so wee !
Don’t you know what, at the fountain,
You so truly promised me ? ”

This quaint song made everybody laugh, and as a joke they let the Little White Dog come in. He went straight up to the bride and bridegroom and sang a similar little song. The bridegroom laughed, but said he might sit near them because he begged so prettily. The next morning, according to the Latvian custom, the betrothal ceremony took place. Once more the little dog sang a little song, and the bridegroom looked very surprised, but said nothing. When the betrothal was over and the wedding breakfast served, the Little Dog demanded a seat at the table, so the bride let him sit by her.

After the breakfast they all got into the carriage to drive to church for the wedding ceremony. The Little White Dog demanded to come as well, and the bridegroom let him come. When they arrived at the church the priest had no sooner begun the service than the Little White Dog began to sing in a very loud voice :

“ Maiden, you with me must marry,
Me, your Mannikin so wee.
Don’t you know what at the fountain
You so truly promised me ? ”

Latvian : The Little White Dog

“What is it you have promised?” asked the priest, and the girl had to tell everything that had happened. The wicked woman was very angry to think her plans were frustrated, and stamped her foot in rage and ran from the church. The Little White Dog ran after her, and the woman would have seized him, but at that very moment a beautiful coach drawn by eight horses drew up by the side of the road. A fine footman alighted and invited the Little White Dog to step into the coach. No sooner had he done so than he changed at once into a handsome Prince. Then the Prince went back to the church and married the girl and took her to live with him at his Golden Castle.

As for the other bridegroom, the Prince made him his Lord High Chancellor, because he had shown him kindness when he had been under a magic spell as a Little White Dog.

CHAPTER XVI

LITHUANIAN : MARUTÉ'S GODMOTHER

MANY of the Lithuanian folk tales are religious legends. The story of Maruté is one that doubtless Lithuanian mothers tell to their children to impress upon them the necessity of telling the truth.

Baltic Folk Stories

Once upon a time there lived a poor couple to whom God gave a daughter. When the day of the christening came they found a godfather, but had no one who would act as godmother. The poor man went weeping through the meadow because he could not find a godmother. There, to his surprise, he met Mary, the mother of Jesus, who promised that she would act as godmother.

"When your daughter is twelve years old," said Mary, "bring her here. Give her the name of Maruté"—the Lithuanian form of Mary—"after her godmother."

When Maruté was twelve years old her father took her to the meadow as he had been told, and there they met Mary, the mother of Jesus. She took Maruté with her to heaven. There Maruté was shown nine rooms and told she might enter all but the ninth. But Maruté was disobedient, and when Mary had left her she entered the ninth room. There she saw God the Father, with many little children playing around Him, and on the floor lay apples of gold and diamonds. That evening Mary asked her if she had been into the ninth room, but Maruté was afraid, and said she had not been there. But Mary could see she was telling her a lie.

The next day the same thing happened. Maruté again went into the ninth room, but again she said she

Lithuanian : Maruté's Godmother

had not entered. Then Mary was angry, and told her that unless she spoke the truth she would lose the power of speech. But Maruté would not tell, and so she became dumb.

Then Mary took her from heaven and brought her to the Lithuanian forest. There they found four big fir trees, and Mary had a little golden hut built for Maruté between the branches, and gave her a golden carriage and a golden spindle.

One day a rich nobleman was travelling through the forest with two greyhounds. When the dogs saw the hut they began to bark loudly. So the nobleman sent for a ladder in order that he might see what was in the hut. When he climbed the ladder and had crept into the hut he saw a young and beautiful girl with a golden carriage and a golden spindle, but the maiden could not speak. The nobleman persuaded the girl to come with him, and in due course they were married. A year passed by and a little son was born to them. That same night Mary, the mother of Jesus, came to Maruté and said : "Maruté, tell me now, were you in the ninth room ? If you will not confess the baby shall be taken from you." Still Maruté would admit nothing, and lo ! the baby had disappeared and she could not say what had become of it, so that there was great sorrow.

Another year passed and another little son was born

Baltic Folk Stories

to them. Again Mary appeared and asked the same question, and again Maruté would admit nothing. And that baby too disappeared. This time the nobleman's mother came to her son and said : "Your wife must be a witch. She ought to be burnt."

The husband believed that it must be so, and a great bonfire was built in the courtyard. Maruté was brought out and bound to the stake. Again Mary appeared to her and asked her the same question, but Maruté refused to acknowledge her guilt. The flames began to consume the wood, but Maruté was silent. Then for the third time Mary asked her : "Maruté, were you in the ninth room ?" Then Maruté answered, "I was !" At that moment the fire was extinguished, the cords fell off Maruté, and she found that she was no longer dumb.

And, best of all, on either side a little son stood laughing.

CHAPTER XVII

ESTONIAN : THE MAIDEN OF THE MILKY WAY

LINDA was the beautiful daughter of the powerful Estonian god Uko. She it was who showed all the sky paths to the little birds when they came flocking home in the springtime, or flew away in the autumn..

Estonian : Maiden of the Milky Way .

She was as a mother to the birds in her tender care of them, and it was no wonder that everybody loved her. Many were the youths who scught her hand in marriage.

One day the Pole Star drove up in a handsome coach with six brown horses, bringing with him ten gifts. But Linda would not marry him. "You always have to stay in the same place," said she.

Then the Moon came in a silver coach drawn by ten brown horses, bringing with him twenty gifts, but him also Linda refused, saying, "You change your looks too often."

Hardly had the Moon driven sorrowfully away than the Sun arrived. His coach was golden and was drawn by twenty red-gold horses. But Linda said : "I do not want you. Like the Moon, you run day after day in the same street."

Then at midnight in a diamond coach drawn by a thousand white horses came the Northern Lights. Linda was breathless at his magnificence, and ran to the door to meet him. His gifts were a whole coach load of gold, silver, pearls and jewelled ornaments. Linda was pleased and agreed to become his bride. "For," said she, "you do not always travel in the same course. You flash where you will and stop when you please. Each time you appear robed in new beauty and richness."

Baltic Folk Stories

So the betrothal ceremony took place. But the Sun, Moon and Pole Star looked sadly on.

After the ceremony the Northern Lights had to hurry back to the sky, but he promised to come back soon for the wedding and to take Linda back with him to his home in the North.

Then Linda set to work to make her bridal robes, and when they were finished she waited for the bridegroom. Day after day went by, but still he did not come.

When she found, as the months went by, that he did not come, she put on her bridal robes and white veil and sat down in a meadow by a river. Here she wept so many tears that many little brooks were formed and ran into the valleys. The little birds whom she loved so well tried to comfort her, but all in vain. They did not know where to fly since she no longer guided them.

Uko, Linda's father, when he saw how she grieved, sent the Winds to fetch her. The Winds sank down beside her in the meadow, and gently lifting her, bore her up to the sky. There they laid her down and there she dwells today. If you look up at the Milky Way you will see her bridal robes as she shows the way to little birds who wander.

Linda is happy now, for in the winter she gazes towards the North and waves her hand to the Northern

Estonian : Maiden of the Milky Way ,
Lights, who flashes near to her and once more asks her
to be his bride.

But the Northern Lights can never carry her away
to his home, for she must stay forever in the sky, robed
in white and spreading out her veil to make the Milky
Way.

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